

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method for operating a ~~still~~ camera, comprising the steps of waiting for an operator action, and responding to the operator action by:

detecting and evaluating information from a scene in a continuing manner until a point in time at which it is determined that the information from the scene includes information which is representative of a human facial characteristic and which satisfies a specified criteria; and

recording an image of the scene corresponding substantially to the point in time.

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2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein said detecting step includes the step of detecting an image of radiation from the scene which includes the information representative of a facial characteristic.

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3. A method according to Claim 2, wherein said evaluating step includes the steps of identifying in the image of radiation at least one pattern representative of a face, and evaluating the pattern relative to the specified criteria.

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4. A method according to Claim 3, wherein the specified criteria includes a size limit criteria, and wherein said evaluating step includes the step of rejecting each identified pattern which is representative of a face but which fails to satisfy the size limit criteria.

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5. A method according to Claim 2, wherein said evaluating step includes the steps of identifying in the image of radiation a plurality of patterns each representative of a respective face, and evaluating each such detected pattern relative to the specified criteria.

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5 6. A method according to Claim 2, wherein said evaluating step includes the steps of identifying in the image of radiation a plurality of patterns each representative of a respective face, thereafter using a further criteria to select a subset of the patterns, and then evaluating only the selected patterns in the subset relative to the specified criteria.

10 7. A method according to Claim 6, wherein the further criteria includes a specified number, and wherein said step of using the further criteria includes the step of selecting for the subset a group of the patterns equal in number to the specified number.

15 8. A method according to Claim 7, wherein the further criteria includes a prioritization criteria, and wherein said step of using the further criteria includes the step of using the prioritization criteria to effect the selection of the group of patterns in the subset.

20 9. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the specified criteria is whether an eye is open, and wherein said evaluating step includes the steps of identifying at least one eye in the information from the scene, and analyzing whether each such identified eye is open.

25 30 10. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the specified criteria is whether a mouth is closed, and wherein said evaluating step includes the steps of identifying at least one mouth in the information from the scene, and analyzing whether each such identified mouth is closed.

5 11. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the specified criteria is whether a face is oriented toward the camera, and wherein said evaluating step includes the steps of identifying at least one face in the information from the scene, and analyzing whether each such identified face is oriented to face substantially toward the camera.

10 12. A method according to Claim 1, wherein said detecting step includes the step of detecting audible sound from the scene, the information representative of the facial characteristic being embodied in the detected audible sound.

15 13. A method according to Claim 12, wherein said evaluating step includes the step of determining whether the detected audible sound is representative of a predetermined word.

20 14. A method according to Claim 12, wherein said evaluating step includes the step of evaluating whether the detected audible sound is representative of laughter.

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5 15. A ~~still~~ camera, comprising:
an operator actuatable element;
a section which is operative to wait for operator
actuation of the element, and which is operative to respond
to operator actuation of the element by:

10 detecting and evaluating information from a scene in
a continuing manner until a point in time at which it is
determined that the information from the scene includes
information which is representative of a human facial
characteristic and which satisfies a specified criteria;
and

15 recording an image of the scene corresponding
substantially to the point in time.

20 16. A camera according to Claim 15, wherein said
section is operative to effect the detection of the
information from the scene by detecting an image of
radiation from the scene.

25 17. A camera according to Claim 15, wherein said
section is operative to effect the detection of information
from the scene by detecting audible sounds from the scene.

30 18. A camera according to Claim 15, wherein the
facial characteristic is an eye, and the specified criteria
is whether the eye is open.

19. A camera according to Claim 15, wherein the
facial characteristic is a mouth, and the specified
criteria is whether the mouth is closed.

5 20. A camera according to Claim 15, wherein the
specified criteria is whether a face associated with the
facial characteristic is oriented to face substantially
toward the camera.

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